

Acknowledgements and Gratitude

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Season 112, Program 84



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND DANCE

WORLD MUSIC SERIES

Zedashe Ensemble

folk music and dance from
the Republic of Georgia

Beall Concert Hall
Friday, April 19, 2013, 8 p.m.



1. **Chakrulo.** A song praising the natural beauty of Kakheti (eastern Georgia). *You are sweet, Kakheti, and you have the great wetlands of the Alazani river, the deer in the meadows, and the reeds along the lori river banks. Pheasants are hiding in the brush among the beautiful flowers. I would give everything to you. I love your fields where the wild mountain goats graze. Your eyes are like blackberries and your cheeks are like the subtle skin of apples. Your voice is like a dove's. I ask you to tell me the truth, at least once, from your heart.*
2. **Elesa.** From the Guria region of southwestern Georgia, sung while carving a wine trough. *Elesa* is a Greek-based abbreviation for "Lord, have mercy on us."
Men, let's go. *Elesa.* Let's take the log out.
Come on, boys, lift it up. *Elesa.*
3. **Agzevani.** Composed by Shergil Pirtskhelani in 2010. *I will go to Agzevani for salt. I will bring salt crystals back, and then I will embrace my mother, my child, and my wife. Where are you going, my friend? Teach me the way so I don't make a wrong turn.*
4. **Si Vardisi.** A song in the Megrelian language of western Georgia, praising the beauty of a woman. *You surpass the rose; in winter the rose loses its beauty. The nightingale can attest to the breadth of the eternal beauty that lives in your branches. You shine brighter and are more beautiful than the moon. God creates beauties such as you to test us in our struggles. You have a beautiful body and lovely face, your hair is thick and curly. This is true: it is better to live with love and struggle, than live without it.*
5. **Shen Gigalob.** Sung during the Divine Liturgy when the Sacraments are being blessed in the altar. *We are chanting for you, we bless you, we are grateful before you, our Lord. We ask you to intercede on our behalf.*
6. **Ushguluri Lashkruli.** Sung in the Svan language of western Georgia. *Poor Ushgolian villagers, the enemies are coming from the North Caucasus, like leaves falling from a tree. Poor Ushgolian priests and peasants, they are shaving your beards. The enemy is killing the great warriors amongst you and is using the weakest to carry heavy burdens. They are killing your children and raping your wives.*
7. **Mtidan Simgherit Movdivart.** A shepherd's song from eastern Georgia. *It is about an exhausted shepherd returning from the Tushetian mountains heading towards Kakheti, the bountiful valley where he will be reunited with his kin once again.*

Tamuna Beridze is a new member of the choir, a natural singer with a voice trained in eastern Georgian folk music. She has been a member of Tamila's church choir since 2003, and sang top voice for Niko's traveling school choir. She joined Zedashe this past year, and sings duets with Ketevan in their eastern Georgian repertoire of melismatic and heroic ballads.

Vano Tchitcharauli has been associated with Zedashe for over 14 years as a drummer, choreographer, and dance instructor. He began training Zedashe's lead male dancer, Irakli Kantchurachvili, when Irakli was five years old, and he has worked with him ever since. Vano has performed with Zedashe throughout Georgia, including performances for the U.S. Ambassador and U.S. Deputy Secretaries of State. Although he has worked with and performed in Zedashe since its inception, this is his first U.S. tour with the group. Vano joins Zedashe on this tour as a featured drummer, bass singer, and dancer.

Irakli Kantchurashvili was discovered by the Zedashe ensemble as one of the best dancers of his generation in eastern Georgia. Irakli began dance training at age five under dance master Vano Chatncharauli, and has performed at folk festivals throughout Georgia. A recent addition to the Jleha dance troupe, he joins the Zedashe tour where he will showcase the incredible footwork of traditional martial and heroic dance from the Caucasus.

A large part of Zedashe Ensemble's mission is to train the next generation of professional folk singers, instrumentalists, and dancers. We are proud to include the following graduates of our recently developed folk school on this U.S. tour. They joined the ensemble in 2011.

Aleko Matiashvili attended the Zedashe ensemble folk school in Signaghi. He specializes in the highly ornamented singing tradition of Kakheti.

Teona Taralashvili joined the ensemble as a master dancer. She has studied dance with master dancer Vano Tchitcharauli since she was 10.

Natalia Gorelishvili joined the ensemble as a master singer. She specializes in the highly ornamented female vocal tradition of the Kakheti region in eastern Georgia.

The group's name is taken from the special earthenware jug — *zedashe* — historically used for making wine. Wine made in zedashes was intended for the veneration of ancestors, and the tapping of the zedashe every year carried great ritual significance.

Zedashe's fourth US tour is organized by Village Harmony, a world music umbrella organization. In their 2007 tour of the east coast, *Zedashe* performed at Dartmouth College, Yale University, Princeton University, Williams College, and Middlebury College. In 2010 *Zedashe* toured seven states in the east, the midwest, and the west coast. *Zedashe* has also toured the United Kingdom (2002) and Holland (2008). For this tour, the ensemble has a new album to follow up on their previous six albums and two books of folk songs.

Biographies of Zedashe ensemble lead members

Ketevan Mindorashvili, director of the Zedashe ensemble, was raised in a traditional singing family in her home of Signaghi, in eastern Georgia. She has become well known as a singer and teacher of Georgian folk music, with an emphasis on the fluid ornamentation of eastern folk songs. She has a deep knowledge of church chant, and is a master of the *panduri*, a three stringed lute from her region. Ketevan is also a solo dancer in the Jleha dance troop based in Signaghi, and has brought a new repertoire of folk dances to the Zedashe Ensemble for their second tour to the United States.

Tamila Sulhanishvili is a piano teacher at the music institute in Signaghi, as well as the choir director at the local church of Saint George. She is an experienced workshop leader, and generally sings first voice in church chants.

Shmagi Phirtskhelani is from the highland region of Svaneti (northern Georgia), the second of eight siblings who were all raised singing and dancing traditional songs. Shmagi makes his permanent home in Signaghi, where he is an artisan, teacher and performer. He plays the *panduri* (plucked lute), *chuniri* (bowed lute), and *chiboni* (bagpipe).

Shergil Pirtskhelani also moved to Signaghi from Svaneti, after studying painting in the capital for two years. He directs a furniture design and building business in Signaghi, where he sings bass and second voice in the Zedashe Ensemble, and performs with the Jleha dance troop. He plays *panduri*, *chonguri* (four- string plucked lute), and *chuniri*.

8. Siqvarulman Mogiqvana. Sung on the great feast day “Saturday of Lazarus” before Easter. From the Shemokmedi Chant School in western Georgia. *Love brought you here from Bethlehem to Lazarus. Godlike One, through your compassion you resurrected the one who was in hell for four days.*

9. Kalo Kalta Mzeo. A story of two lovers who were stoned to death, as a result of the woman committing adultery. A pile of rocks marks the spot near Gori, in the Kartli region of central Georgia.

Boy: Sun-like lady, I have known you for ten months. On the eleventh everything went dark, one minute became a day. Sun-like lady, bring light back to my day.

Girl: My sunlight, I am waiting for you everyday. My torture is great, my day has turned to night. Our fate is to not be together, our sun has darkened.

Boy: Sun-like lady, the sun has darkened, but they cannot keep us apart. They have angered the sky; we will travel together to the otherworld.

10. Didebata. Round Dance from Svaneti (western Georgia). The song praises God with a mixture of pre-Christian and Christian symbolism.

11. Dzmao Ra Sjobda. From Kakheti (eastern Georgia). *What is better than brotherhood? A man who has many friends cannot be tainted by the enemy. You remember your brothers when you are fighting alone, when you don't have any help to disperse the enemy, when swords clash and the enemy has not been conquered. Guns, swords, and shields - what is better than brotherhood? Let's stand side by side with interlocking arms. Then we can rip through with our swords and level our enemies, for our victory.*

12. Khorumi. From Ajara (southwestern Georgia bordering Turkey). This dynamic dance re-enacts the act of scouting to find the enemy's location.

INTERMISSION

13. Mravaljhamier. A feasting song from Kakheti (eastern Georgia), wishing the revelers long life and well-being.

14. Tskhrajer Chavshale Nats'navi. A melancholy song about a highland girl braiding her hair over and over again, looking out at the world from her tower, wishing she could find true love.

15. Ajarian dance melodies. A selection of dance melodies from Ajara, the Black Sea coastal region of southwestern Georgia bordering Turkey.

- 16. Maqruli.** Traditionally sung at weddings in the Kakheti region, celebrating the newlyweds and their love for each other. *We are coming with joy, we are bringing a red pheasant. I will throw you a handkerchief stitched with golden embroidery, with my heart wrapped inside. My heart is seared by its love for you; do not forget me.*
- 17. Saluman Akhatsa.** From the repertoire of the Abkhazia State Ensemble (northwestern Georgia). The song commemorates the hero Saluman Akhatsa, whose brother was killed by a local ruler. Saluman took revenge before the sun reached its zenith.
- 18. Kalgulo.** About a beautiful young woman awaiting the return of her beloved. *You are crossing over the fields. I will greet you in the open doorway, my eyes dark and shining. I will embrace you with my arms.*
- 19. Alilo.** From Guria (southwestern Georgia). *We celebrate the birth of Christ. May God give us great days.*
- 20. Hada i Juqva.** From Svaneti (northern Georgia). *Hada and Juva, heroes from Sgobuledi village, you had a war. Your betrayers are moving from mountain to mountain in Svaneti.*
- 21. Ierishi.** From Guria (southwestern Georgia). This song was used to build up the courage of warriors before entering battle. The syllables sung do not have any direct literal meaning in everyday spoken language.
- 22. Hai Shen Kakheto.** From Meskheta (southwestern Georgia). *Oh Kakheti, I saw you in distress. Your women and daughters-in-law have been taken to Dagestan, and your bulls and water buffalo. The meals you made were left untouched in your homes.*
- 23. Mzechais Mogisaklise.** From Tusheti (northeastern Georgia). *When the sun set I started to miss you. I always miss you, and all of my songs become melancholy. Quietly with whispers I have missed you, and I have had many tears fall from my eyes. It would be better if I didn't have such love. I thought that I heard your voice and your footsteps. You were the one that I chose. Why did you end up another's?*
- 24. Alilo Sashobao.** From Kakheti (eastern Georgia). *On the 25th of December, Christ was born. The one who was the bearer of the news will be the recipient of great grace. May God give you joy!*
- 25. Parikoba.** Highland Sword Dance. Georgians are known as extremely hospitable people, who love guests, feasting, poetry and song. Unfortunately, they have often been dragged into war to protect their kin and culture.

ABOUT ZEDASHE

Mountainous Caucasus Georgia has a long and rich tradition of three-part polyphonic singing. The music features a dark, sonorous vocal quality and harmonies that may be startling and unexpected to a western ear. Directed by Ketevan Mindorashvili, *Zedashe* was founded in the mid 1990s to promote repertoire that was suppressed during the Communist era. Currently, *Zedashe* works to preserve and revitalize a way of singing threatened by modernization. With four male and three female vocalists, as well as dancers and instrumentalists, *Zedashe* is one of the few mixed gender performing ensembles in Georgia. This group aims to capture the traditional way of singing in the home. Each concert tour represents two years of research, in which ensemble members gather field recordings from various singing masters and families throughout Georgia. From these recordings, *Zedashe* develops a concert program that preserves the integrity of the singing contexts from which the songs are gathered. The repertoire includes three-part polyphonic chants from the Georgian Orthodox Christian liturgy, one of the first targets of Tsarist and Communist suppression. *Zedashe* also performs a full range of folk song genres including work songs, love songs, historical ballads, war dance songs, and ritual circle dances. These are sometimes accompanied by the *chunir* (bowed lute from the Svan region of northwestern Georgia), *panduri* (plucked lute from Kakheti in eastern Georgia), *chonguri* (lute from the Guria region of southwestern Georgia), *doli* (drum), *chiboni* (goat-skin bagpipe), and accordion.

Dance is an integral part of traditional family singing, and all of the members of *Zedashe* are trained as dancers. These dance songs show off the intricate footwork and gestures of varied traditional Georgian dance styles, both lyric and martial.

With her rich and flexible low-contralto voice, Ketevan Mindorashvili has won a wide reputation for her mastery of the intricate, melismatic ornamentation of the traditional songs from her native region of Kakheti (eastern Georgia). The brothers Shergil and Shmagi Pitskhelani come from a large family with a long tradition of singing in the highland region of Svanetia (northern Georgia). They bring a knowledge of the remarkable singing styles of this remote area, where non-tempered tunings of the old Georgians remain alive in current practice. Because the group is made primarily of singers from these two families, their sound is authentically familial, and in performances it is evident that their relationships extend beyond the stage. This concert also features three students from *Zedashe's* new folk music school based in Kakheti. *Zedashe* founded the school in 2011 in order to teach and mentor the next generation of singers and dancers in their community.